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Thatcher Orders Complete Report on Spying Charges

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LONDON—Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher called Monday for a government report on accusations in a newspaper story that Sir Roger Hollis, head of British counterintelligence for 10 years, was a Soviet spy.

She said she would address the issue in the House of Commons, probably on Thursday.

Thatcher ordered the Cabinet secretary, Sir Robert Armstrong, to have a full report on the allegations on her desk when she returns this evening from a Common Market summit in the Netherlands, her spokesman said.

Chapman Pincher, defense correspondent of the Daily Mail, made the charge. He has detailed the accusations in his book, "Their Trade is Treachery," which will be published this week.

Members of Parliament insisted on a full investigation of the British Security Service, or MI-5, which has the responsibility for counterintelligence in the United Kingdom.

If true, the report would indicate the greatest possible damage to the Anglo-American intelligence effort during the Cold War days. It would be tantamount to learning that FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover had been a KGB agent. Hollis headed MI-5 from 1956 to 1965, and held high positions in the agency before that. He died in 1973.

The revelations rocked the British Establishment Monday. While Pincher's stories have not always been accurate in the past, he is known to have good contacts among the members of the intelligence services.

CIA, FBI, View

If his accounts are confirmed, it would reinforce the view held by the American CIA and FBI that the highly vaunted British intelligence services were once penetrated at high levels by Soviet agents.

"One intelligence specialist" said Monday: "If Sir Roger Hollis was a Russian agent, it would make all the other spies like George Blake, Kim Philby, Guy Burgess, and Donald Maclean."

"And it would mean that there probably wasn't a major U.S. or British secret worth knowing that the Russians didn't have."

Family Reaction

Only a year ago, Sir Anthony Blunt, the former art adviser to Queen Elizabeth II and an MI-5 officer during World War II, was revealed as having been a Soviet spy.

Hollis' son, Adrian, a lecturer at Keble College, Oxford, said he was "shattered and hurt" by the report. "My father was a man who loved his country," he said.

Hollis' daughter-in-law, Margaret Hollis, 39, said "the whole thing is wildly untrue" and "completely without foundation."

"My husband and Sir Roger's widow, Lady Hollis, both find this senseless muckraking very, very painful," she said.

Hollis, son of a bishop, attended Oxford but did not receive a degree, then joined the British American Tobacco Co. in China. In 1939, he joined the counterintelligence service in London and quickly rose to become head of the anti-Soviet branch. In 1953, he was made deputy director of the entire Security Service, and in 1956 he became director general.

He was knighted in 1960 and retired from government service in 1965. He lived in southern England until his death.

But according to Pincher, five years after his retirement, Hollis was called back to face an official interrogation covering his 30-year career. For 48 hours in a special interrogation house, Hollis was reportedly grilled about his past life and associations by men who had been his juniors in the service.

Pledges Memory Lapse

Hollis never admitted any guilt, according to Pincher, but his answers were said to be less than satisfactory, and he often pleaded a lapse of memory in various areas.

In 1974, one of Britain's most distinguished servants, Lord Trend, who as Sir Burke Trend was secretary of the Cabinet for a decade, was called out of retirement to hold a secret investigation into the Hollis matter, the article said. After three weeks' study of previously assembled evidence, Pincher said, Trend concluded that there was a strong evidence that MI-5 had been deeply penetrated over many years by someone besides Blunt.

Trend named Hollis as a likely suspect, Pincher said, declaring that

"According to Pincher, Trend said that Hollis had frustrated attempts by MI-5 officers investigating the penetration of the counterintelligence service as well as of the Secret Intelligence Service, which is called MI-6."

Trend refused Monday to confirm or deny the views attributed to him by Pincher.

In the Daily Mail story, Pincher wrote: "Even though it proved impossible to prove Sir Roger's guilt either by Lord Trend or by a joint Secret Service/Security (counterintelligence) Service committee, which investigated the matter, the fact that it was even suspected that the head of our security services could have been a KGB agent is enough to rock the public's confidence in the organization."

"In fact, I have established that loyal MI-5 officers who uncovered the evidence which led to Sir Roger's dramatic interrogation believe that the Russians penetrated the security and intelligence services so deeply and for so long that they not only neutralized them but effectively ran them."

"I have established that this is also the view of senior officers of the CIA who had to be alerted to the fact. Some of them are satisfied that the main culprit was Hollis, in which case he may have been the most damaging spy in history."

Under the British system, MI-5 is responsible for counterespionage, countersabotage, countersubversion and protective security, which involves investigating security risks.

Oxford Connection?

Pincher suggests that Hollis may have had communist friends while an undergraduate at Oxford—at about the same time that men like Burgess, Philby and Blunt at Cambridge were recruited by communists to become agents for the Soviet Union.

Hollis, said Pincher, was also said to have contacts with Soviet agents in China.

Hollis was married in 1937 but was divorced in 1968 and married his private secretary of 18 years.

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